

RUSSIANS RETREAT ACROSS THE SERETH

Galatz, Key to the Moldavia
Line, Now Under Fire of
Teuton Guns.

RUMANIANS AT THE RIVER

Czar's Forces Start Offensive
on Riga Front in Hope of
Stemming Tide.

LONDON, Jan. 6.—The battle of the Sereth seems about to become another important Teuton victory. Russians and Rumanians are being driven across the River Sereth by Von Mackensen's troops, who reached its southern bank at two places.

The whole Sereth line is in danger. Galatz, just beyond Braila in the corner formed by the Sereth and the Danube, is officially announced to be under fire of the German guns. Galatz is the key to the Sereth line, and its eastern buttress, Foculeni, its western outpost, is in peril of encirclement. The Teutons have cut one point out through the Carpathians, which screen the Sereth line from the northwest.

In an effort to stop the Teuton pressure which threatens to push them out of Moldavia and turn the left wing in the process, the Russians have started a strong offensive near Riga, on their right wing and 800 miles away from the northern end of the 1,600 mile Russian front. Fierce fighting is going on in this region of intense cold, frozen marshes and rivers and lakes covered with ice, with some success for the Russians.

River As Is Reached.

After the deadliest hand to hand fighting with German troops, which alone held this part of the eastern front, the Russians captured two rows of trenches fifteen miles southwest of Riga. After repulsing German counter attacks the Russians charged again from these captured positions. They captured the German position southeast of the village of Kalnien, taking 272 prisoners, one light battery and six machine guns.

To-night the German War Office announced that "it is officially reported that the engagements southwest of Riga proceeded favorably for us." The day German statement admits some success for the Russians, but says they were repulsed at more places than they succeeded.

Five Towns Are Stormed.

In the fighting along this front, from the region east of Foculeni to the Danube north of Braila, the Teutons stormed, leveled, captured, and burned, five towns of considerable size which the Russians had fortified also. The most remarkable achievement was that of Lieutenant Colonel von Kottwitz, who captured three villages with a reinforced corps of cavalry.

After the Russians evacuated Braila they made a stubborn resistance, and withdrew across the Danube. Evidently they had done well the work of making Braila almost useless to the Teutons, for the German War Office reports to-night that most of Braila's factories were wrecked and does not mention that any of the large stores of food which had been there were left for the invaders.

In the Carpathians, though, compelled to attack under conditions more difficult than in the Sereth lowlands, the Teutons are pressing forward over a wide front. Northwest of Foculeni the Teutons have practically forced their way through the mountains. Throwing the Rumanians from heights southeast of Soveia, they are advancing along the valleys of the Putna and Zabala toward the main railroad from Cernowitz to Galatz.

Galatz the Crucial Point.

In many other of the valleys that make corridors through the Carpathians the Teutons are forcing their way forward, though the Russian statement today asserts success in the Oltuz and the Ural valleys.

The stability of the Sereth line now depends upon Galatz. The bombardment of it is now under way, comes certainly from German guns across the Danube in the Dobruja and probably also from guns on the southern bank of the Sereth at its confluence with the Danube. In order to capture Galatz, however, the Teutons must cross either the Danube or the Sereth. Once that was done the Teutons would have gained behind the Sereth just as they got behind the Alt, on which the Rumanians tried to make a stand, and outflanked them.

The text of the German statement follows:

"Front of Archduke Joseph—South of the Trotus Valley Bavarian and Austro-Hungarian regiments stormed extensive Teuton defensive establishments between Kottulna and Paltanau. In addition to the heavy sanguinary losses suffered by the enemy we took 300 prisoners.

"German columns after clearing height positions southeast of Soveia are advancing along the valleys toward the northeast.

"Successes of Mackensen.

"Army group of Field Marshal von Mackensen: After an effective artillery preparation divisions of Lieut.-Gen. Schmidt von Knobelsdorf (Heinrich) and Gen. Gellinger, commanded by Lieut.-Gen. Kuhnle, strongly constructed and fitted with barbed wire barricades and anti-aircraft defenses, from Tataru as far as Rimnien, captured the Teuton positions and advanced across the swampy river sector to the Sereth. The enemy there still holds some villages, from which he launched unsuccessful counter attacks.

"Further to the southeast Lieut.-Gen. Gellinger, with a reinforced cavalry corps, captured Olneas, Gullone, and Maximien. The vanguards reached the Sereth.

"The Russians on the night of January 5, retreated from further resistance south of the Sereth against the Teuton army of General von Mackensen, and retreated to the north bank, sacrificing strong rear guards.

"German and Hungarian cavalry entered Braila, from the west and German and Hungarian infantry from the east across the Danube. The most important Rumanian commercial city is thus in the hands of the allies (Teuton).

"New operations that are intended are being begun. Galatz is under our fire."

Fighting on Riga Front

"Front of Prince Leopold—The Russians, after the failure of attack made yesterday morning, repeated the attacks with violent artillery preparation, with five forces, between the coast

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and the Mitau-Riga road. East of the River As they entered our position, across the frozen swampy to the width of a battalion. At all other points they were repulsed. In counter attacks 200 men and several machine guns remained in our hands.

The Russian official statement follows:

"Western Front—Enemy attacks on our detachments east of the Drul swamp, 10 versts from Riga, were beaten back. Our detachments, by a bold attack, took possession of the road southwest of the end of Lake Babit and after a fierce struggle they occupied two rows of trenches six versts east of the village of Kalnien, 20 versts southwest of Riga. We captured some prisoners and a few machine guns. Counter attacks by the enemy were repulsed.

"After this our detachments moved on further and reached the river south of the village of Kalnien and took possession of the position southeast of this village. During our attacks we made prisoners of three officers and 272 men and captured one light battery and six machine guns. Counter attacks by the enemy were unsuccessful.

"Rumanian Front—South of Kottulna the enemy forced our troops to withdraw two versts eastward. The battle for the possession of a height north of the Ural Valley was concluded with a counter attack on our part which overthrew the enemy.

"Enemy attacks in the Oltuz Valley region were repulsed and our detachments occupied a height south of the Oltuz River.

"The enemy, with superior forces, attacked the Rumanians on the upper part of the Suchitza River and pressed them back to Roscan. The enemy succeeded also in pushing back the Rumanians in the region of Koprur, twelve versts southeast of the confluence of the Putna and Zabala rivers and northwest of Odobesti. Enemy attacks near the latter place were repulsed by the Rumanians.

"The enemy bombarded Rimnien, on the Lower Rinnik River, with his heavy artillery and took the offensive on the front Rimnien-Gullana-Klovenu-Maximien and pressed back our advanced posts four versts eastward after a stubborn resistance. At nightfall the enemy undertook an attack along the high road from Gullana to Obenechi, but was arrested by our fire.

"We evacuated Braila on Thursday and retired across the Sereth River."

BRITISH CUT WAY TO

GERMANS' 3D LINE

Troops Enter the Enemy's
Trenches Over a Wide Front
Southeast of Arras.

LONDON, Jan. 6.—Great raiding activity all along the front in France and Belgium, besides much artillery activity, is reported by all the War Offices to-night. The most important of the raids was a dash by British troops, who cut through German trenches on a wide front southeast of Arras, reaching the third trench line and doing much damage. The official statement follows:

British-North of Beaumont-Hamel

We seized two hostile posts last night. A subsequent enemy counter attack was beaten off and our new positions were consolidated.

This afternoon we successfully raided the enemy's positions southeast of Arras under cover of a heavy bombardment. Our troops entered the enemy's trench system over a wide front and penetrated to his third line. Many dugouts were bombed and destroyed and much damage was done to the enemy's defenses.

There has been increased artillery activity in the neighborhood of Hebuterne. Elsewhere the usual artillery activity continued.

French—During the course of the

afternoon there were violent but brief artillery actions in the region of Paschendale (Belgium).

On the Somme front our artillery effectively shelled German organizations in the region of Bois d'Abbe, Omelecourt and Liecourt. Surprise attacks by the enemy on our advanced positions east of Butte du Mesnil in the region of Maisons de Champagne and west of Arracourt, were repulsed by our fire. The enemy left prisoners in our hands.

Belgian—There was considerable

artillery activity along the whole Belgian front. In the direction of Rensselaerskerke reciprocal bombardments by field and trench artillery took place.

German—During last evening there were vigorous artillery engagements in the Ypres salient, on both banks of the Somme and in isolated sectors on the Champagne and Meuse fronts.

Near Serre, north of the Aene in

the Somme region British troops in a night attack entered our most advanced trench.

Our raiding detachments in the Marnes district and on the northeastern front of Verdun brought back prisoners from the French line.

U-BOATS USE WIRELESS LURE.

German Submarines Said to Be Using S O S Signals.

Special Cable Dispatch to The Sun from the London Times.

LONDON, Jan. 6.—A special dispatch from Amsterdam says that German submarines are now sending out S O S wireless signals to lure British vessels to destruction.

The Telegram learns from an officer of

a large steamer of an important Dutch line that while on a voyage from the Dutch East Indies he received while in the Bay of Biscay an S O S message. The ship immediately rushed to the place indicated, and found a German submarine which was not in distress. The captain of the submarine expressed regret that it was a Dutch and not a British ship that had heard the call.

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SENATORS PUT OIL FIGHT UP TO WILSON

Urge Him to Settle Controversy Between Navy and Interior Chiefs.

WASHINGTON, Jan. 6.—President Wilson

has been appealed to by Senate leaders to lay before the Cabinet the points in the controversy between the Interior Department and Navy Department over the provisions of the Phelan oil leasing bill.

The President has been told that if the controversy, which has been growing in bitterness for more than a year, is carried to the floor of the Senate, as now seems probable unless the President intervenes, the results are likely to embarrass the Administration.

The spectacle of two Cabinet officers in sharp disagreement over a matter of policy, with the charges of subservience to present interests and incidental references to a lobby of oil men, may mean a Cabinet disintegration.

There are a number of Senators desirous of doing what they feel is right in

the matter, but the Senators are halting between the advice of the Secretary of the Navy, which suggests a recognition of the needs of the navy for fuel oil as an important part of the preparedness program, and the disregard of present interests, seeking to get oil concessions to which they are not entitled either by law or equity, and the advice of the Secretary of the Interior that entrymen in good faith have done development work in the navy reserves and should be permitted to enjoy their leases and improvements on such terms and in consideration of the payment of such royalties as the Government may impose.

The President has been asked by one or more Senators of his own party to lay the facts before the Cabinet and try to get a compromise plan that can be approved by all.

It is recommended by the President the promise is made that Congress will respond with any relief legislation necessary to meet the situation. But unless the President does take the matter up Congress will witness a lively fight soon.

Already some of the Western Senators interested in the recognition of the private interests have charged Secretary Daniels with disregard of statutes and with having "muckraked" the Interior Department.

Charges that an active lobby maintained by oil interests has been at work in the Capitol corridors for several weeks in the interest of the private entrymen are also being bandied, with threats that the Senate lobby committee may be invited to get busy again.

LANSING ASKS VOPICKA FACTS.

Secretary Cables U. S. Minister in Rumania of Germany's Charges.

WASHINGTON, Jan. 6.—Secretary Lansing today cabled Minister Vopicka at Bucharest, accredited to Rumania, Serbia and Bulgaria, asking for a statement on Germany's charge that he had been guilty of unethical conduct in favor of Rumania. During the investigation the Minister will be continued at his post.

If the charges are substantiated he will be dropped from the diplomatic service; if not he probably will be transferred out of courtesy to Germany.

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